TAB 5 pages 1 to 18

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0000 21, DECEMBER THURSDAY, GLOBE SOSTON

Deaths B12.
Wently: 314

I reportedly hid key evidence

Occuments show t knew of Deegan laying plot in '65

By Ralph Ranalli

Secret documents recently discoved in a Justice Department probe of 31 corruption appear to show that the ureau knew not only that the wrong en were convicted of a 1965 gangland under, but also that agents were told wuit the plot two days before it hapined and apparently did nothing to

The reports, found at FBI Leadman. Is in Washington, were turned over

EDWARD D. L. Cany

yesterday to lawyors for reputed Mafia associa** Peter J. Limone. v no has served 32 years in prise a for the staying

PETER J. LIMONE IMMY P. CAMI

e63 تدني اوgendary Boston hit man

Je. ph 'nhe Animal' Barboza, forw.

Lettone and several other men.

As Umone langua's, 1 s son for three decades, nt. nat might have proved his innovence sat in secret

Dec., in Chelsea. They strongly suggest that the Fb.'s chief witness at the

of small-time hoo _ um Edward "Teddy"

FBI informant files in Washington and were never turned over to the defensembly many John Cavicchi of East Bostic said yesterday.

"This, is a disgrace, If it weren't so track? I, would be laughable," said Carrier, who is handling Limone's bid to have the conviction overturned in Mid-

L. A. Du A. A. Spokeswoman Gail Marduka swicza ' Hined comment,

the f. st. documents also reveal for the f. st. time that the brother of infative mour gangster and FBI luformant Steep phen Flemmi was also successfully recruited as an FBI informant for five months in 1965 — even though other informants were telling the bureau that the was responsible for numerous tills

FB4, Page 87.

Case 1:04-cv-11817-JLT

FBI allegedly hid evidence in slay case

FBI Continued from BI

ings and that he had vowed to become Boston's "No. 1 hit man."

FBI evaluation reports of Vincent J. "Jimmy the Bear" Flemmi's potential usefulness as an FBI mole show the chilling lengths the FBI was willing to go to in its clandestine organized crime informant program.

Special Agent Dennis Condon, for example, wrote one 1964 report that an unnamed informant said Jimmy Flemmi had boasted about becoming Boston's most prolific full-time assassin.

"Flemmi told him [the informant] that all he wants to do now is kill people, and that it is better than hitting banks," the report states. "Informant said Flemmi said that he feels he can now be the top hit man in this area and intends to be."

Another report said Flemmi was a suspect in the Deegan murder and several other killings, but that recruiting him as an informant was "worth the risk."

Even supporters of Limone and the other defendants, who contended for years that they were the victims of an FBI frame-up, called the contents of the documents shocking.

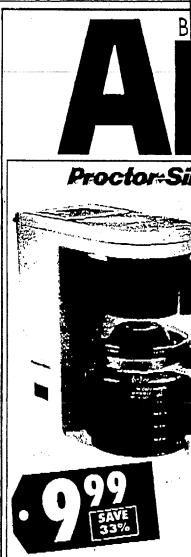
Boston lawyer Victor Garo, who represents Limone's co-defendant, Joseph Salvati, went as far as telling WBZ-TV (Channel 4) that the prosecution was an FBI "murder conspiracy" because the punishment for murder at the time was death in the electric chair. Four of the defendants, including Limone and Salvati, received death sentences that were later changed to life.

The reports were turned over to Cavicchi, Garo, and Suffolk District Attorney Ralph Martin II's office yesterday by Special US Attor-

Vincent J. 'Jimmy the Bear' 'Flemmi told him [the informant] that all he wants to do now is kill people, and In a statement released by a spokesman yesterday, however, Martin said only that his office "is intent on pursuing the truth about the Deegan murder, wherever it leads us."

Limone's family expressed new optimism yesterday,

"Obviously we're very excited. It has just been a terrible tragedy what was done to this man," said nephew Frank Limone.







ney John Durham, who for the last several years has been investigating corruption in the FBI's informent relationships with gangsters Stephen Flemmi and Whitey Bulger.

Durham could not be reached for comment yesterday.

One key report states that on March 10, 1965 — two days before the murder — an unidentified FBI informant told Special Agent H. Paul Rico that Jimmy Flemmi was planning to kill Deegan and that the murder had the blessing of then-New England Mafia boss Raymond LS. Patriarca.

"Informant advised that he had just heard from Jimmy Flemmi, and Flemmi told the informant that Raymond Patriarca has put out the word that Edward Teddy Deegan is to be 'hit,' and that a dry run has already been made and that a close associate of Deegan's has agreed to set him up," Rico's report states.

-I One day after the murder, another informant told Rico that Flemmi, Barboza, and three other men had committed the crime.

Neither Limone, Salvati, nor two other co-defendants, top New England Maña advisor Henry Tameleo and underworld figure Louis Greco, were mentioned. The information was forwarded to FBI headquarters in director J. Edgar Hoover's name, although there is no indication whether Hoover himself actually saw it.

- All four men were convicted. Tameleo and Greco died in prison, while Salvati's sentence was later commuted.
- None of the information, Cavicchi said, was turned over to the defense in the case. Barboza, who was recruited as an FBI witness by Rico and Condon, was the key witness and the only witness against Limone. Privately, even law enforcement officials involved in the case were calling the new documents significant.

"You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that it's not trivlal stuff," one official said.



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1/2/01 Boston Herald 012 2001 WL 3789683

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Tuesday, January 2, 2001

NEWS

Lawyer urges judge to free man jailed in 1965 Mob killing

J.M. LAWRENCE

Attorneys for reputed mobster Peter Limone - who claims he was framed for a 1965 gangland murder - want a Middlesex Superior Court judge to release him this week after 32 years in prison.

"I don't understand why he's still in jail," Limone attorney John Cavicchi said. "This case is a disgrace."

Calling on the commonwealth to give justice to the former dice game operator and grandfather of eight, Cavicchi has filed motions calling on the court to vacate Limone's 1968 conviction and dismiss indictments charging him with the murder of low-level hoodlum Edward 'Teddy" Deegan.

Limone, 66, spent another Christmas at MCI-Norfolk after Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph C. Martin II's office opposed a motion to release him on bail while Judge Margaret Hinkle reviews newly found evidence in the case.

"We have no interest in keeping an innocent person in prison but we have no interest in making a rush to judgment either," James Borghesani, spokesman for Martin, said yesterday.

A Justice Department task force probing corruption within the **FBI** released explosive reports last month from agents' files suggesting agents allowed turncoat Mob hitman Joseph 'The Animal" Barboza to frame four of the six men who went to prison for **Deegan's murder** in a Chelsea alley.

Barboza's testimony as the only witness in the Deegan murder sent Limone, Joseph Salvati, Louis Greco and Henry Tameleo away for a murder they did not commit, according to the agents' reports that were discovered by FBI agents in Washington. Greco and Tameleo died in prison. Salvati's sentence was commuted in 1997.

Information contained in the FBI reports show two days before Deegan was killed on March 12, 1965, an FBI informant told special agent H. Paul Rico that Vincent Flemmi planned to kill Deegan and that then New England Mafia boss Raymond L.S. Patriarca approved the hit.

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Several days after the killing in a report later forwarded to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, Rico wrote the names of five men who the informant said killed Deegan: Flemmi, Joseph Barboza, Ronald Cassesso, Wilfred Roy French and Romeo Martin.

Cavicchi has asked Hinkle to hold a hearing Friday afternoon with Limone present. The attorney said he will argue the courts should throw out Limone's conviction based on a 1957 U.S. Supreme Court decision requiring informants' accounts be supplied to a defendant's defense team.

"I expect the judge to obey the law," said Cavicchi who was argued Limone's innocence for more than two decades.

Cavicchi expressed outrage over Limone's continued incarceration and accused the commonwealth of dragging its feet to cover up an embarrassing chapter in the city's justice system.

"That's absurd," Borghesani said, citing three other cases in the past two years in which Martin's office has moved to exonerate men later shown innocent through new evidence. "We will do the right thing when the evidence supports it."

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON:

LIMONE, PETER; CAVICCHI, JOHN; MARTIN, RALPH C II; BARBOZA,

JOSEPH

ORGANIZATION:

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NEWS SUBJECT:

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Wednesday, January 3, 2001

NEWS

Real killer's lawyer says jailed 'hit man' is innocent

Jonathan Wells

A veteran defense lawyer disclosed yesterday that he was told by his gangster client more than 30 years ago that four innocent men were being prosecuted for a Mob murder and that at least one FBI agent was involved in fabricating the case.

The attorney, Ronald J. Chisolm, said in an interview with the Herald that he received the information in 1967 from his client, Ronald Cassesso, who had been indicted with five other men for the March 12, 1965, murder of low-level hoodlum Edward "Teddy" Deegan.

"There were innocent men being charged, I knew that," Chisolm said.

Chisolm's bombshell disclosure is likely to fuel the growing scandal around the FBI's involvement in the Deegan case.

Chisolm's account corroborates long-hidden FBI documents released last month which show top FBI officials - including then-director J. Edgar Hoover - appparently suppressed credible information which could have prevented those four innocent men from being charged, tried and convicted for Deegan's murder.

The FBI reports, based on information from an unidentified informant, strongly suggest that four of the six men convicted - Joseph Salvati, Peter J. Limone, Henry Tameleo and Louis Greco - were innocent. The documents also show that the bureau knew of the planned murder at least two days before it happened.

The reports indicate the real killers were Joseph "The Animal" Barboza, a prolific Mob hit man who was the government's star witness at the Deegan trial; Vincent "Jimmy the Bear" Flemmi, identified in the reports as an FBI informant; Wilfred Roy French; Romeo Martin; and Cassesso, who later admitted his role in the crime.

According to Chisolm, at a 1967 meeting in state prison, he and Cassesso discussed the Deegan case.

"I asked him who was involved in the Deegan murder and he told me," Chisolm

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said. "He said he was involved, Barboza was involved, the Bear, Jimmy Flemmi, was involved, Romeo Martin was involved, and French was involved.

"He said Salvati, Tameleo, Greco and Limone definitely were not involved."

Cassesso, who died in prison in 1991, told Chisolm he had been offered a deal by then-FBI agent H. Paul Rico, who had already convinced Barboza to testify for the government.

"He (Cassesso) also told me agent Rico had been to see him and wanted him to corroborate Barboza's story, and if he did, he wouldn't do any time for the Deegan killing," Chisolm said.

"At some point, Rico said, 'We can get you together with Barboza and get your stories straightened out."

According to Chisolm, Cassesso turned down the deal, telling Rico he did not want to implicate innocent men.

Asked how he reacted when he was told the FBI was involved in prosecuting innocent men for first-degree murder, Chisolm said, "You know the realities of life; they're going to frame them and they don't care."

Chisolm said it was not uncommon for the FBI to fabricate evidence in organized crime cases back in the 1960s.

"This was not the first case where the feds were out of line," Chisolm said. "If you deal with this and you've seen it a lot . . . you just fight your own battles."

Neither Rico, who retired from the FBI in the 1970s, nor his lawyer could be reached for comment. Barboza, who became the first entry in the federal witness protection program, was murdered in 1976.

Chisolm, 70, represented many of New England's top Mafia figures, including former Boston underboss Gennaro Angiulo and his brothers, Nick, Frank and Donato Angiulo.

He said he did not come forward earlier with what he had been told about the Deegan case because he believed he was bound by the attorney-client privilege.

He said he only recently learned that the code governing the conduct of lawyers in Massachusetts - the Rules of Professional Conduct - were changed in 1998 to allow lawyers to talk if they learned from a client innocent people had been wrongfully convicted of a crime.

Another defense lawyer, Joseph Balliro, has said he too is now willing to testify that his one-time client, Vincent Flemmi, told him essentially the same story Cassesso told Chisolm about Deegan's actual murderers.

When Chisolm decided he wanted to go public, he contacted Victor Garo, the lawyer for Salvati, who served 30 years in prison for the Deegan murder until his sentence was commuted in 1997.

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Chisolm's testimony could help both Salvati and Limone in their continuing efforts to have their convictions thrown out. Salvati's motion for a new trial was denied by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1995 and Limone's motion is currently pending before a Superior Court judge. Limone, currently incarcerated at MCI- Norfolk, has spent the last 32 years in prison.

"This is just more evidence in a mountain of evidence that shows Joe Salvati and Peter Limone to be innocent," Garo said yesterday. "It is about time that the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office does the right thing and dismisses all charges."

The Deegan case is one part of a larger investigation by a special U.S. Department of Justice task force investigating corruption in Massachusetts law enforcement.

Much of that probe has centered on the FBI's long relationship with gangster bosses James J. "Whitey" Bulger and Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi, who for much of the last 30 years were "top echelon" informants for the bureau.

The task force investigation has so far led to indictments against former FBI agent John J. Connolly Jr., former Massachusetts State Police Lt. Richard J. Schneiderhan and former Boston Police officer Michael Flemmi, the brother of Stephen and Vincent Flemmi.

Sources have told the Herald that Rico, who handled the Flemmi brothers as informants, is also a subject of the task force probe. TABULAR OR GRAPHIC MATERIAL SET FORTH IN THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT DISPLAYABLE

Caption: FIGHTING: Peter J. Limone, one of four men who may have been wrongly convicted of killing Edward Deegan, continues to contest his conviction in court. Herald file photo

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON: CHISOLM, RONALD J; CASSESSO, RONALD; SALVATI, JOSEPH; LIMONE, PETER J; RICO, H PAUL

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION ORGANIZATION:

English language content; Crime and Courts; Political and NEWS SUBJECT: General News; Crime (ENGL GCRIM GCAT CRM)

Language: EN

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1/3/01 Hartford Courant 2001 WL 4544442

> The Hartford Courant Convright @ The Hartford Courant 2001

> > Wednesday, January 3, 2001

MAIN (A)

MURDERER SAID FOUR WERE INNOCENT IN '65 SLAYING, LAWYER SAYS

EDMUND H. MAHONY; Courant Staff Writer

A local defense lawyer said Tuesday that a former client of his -- an admitted triggerman in a notorious, decades-old murder -- insisted more than 30 years ago that four men were wrongly convicted with him and that the FBI knew it.

The disclosure by defense lawyer Ronald Chisholm is the latest in a growing list of allegations that raise questions about FBI behavior in the 1965 case. An assortment of similar allegations has become public recently as a special U.S. Department of Justice task force enters the third year of an investigation of law enforcement misconduct in the Boston area.

Much of the information being examined by the task force seems to have been foreshadowed by events in the 1965 case and suggests that a handful of FBI agents routinely broke the law when dealing with a string of highly placed informants. In the 1965 case and others, it appears that known murderers were spared prosecution in return for cooperating with the bureau. Worse, innocent men may have been substituted for the real killers.

Chisholm said during an interview Tuesday that his former client, gangster Ronald Cassesso, now dead, admitted during their conversations in the late 1960s to being one of the participants in the 1965 gangland execution of Edward "Teddy"

In addition, Chisholm said, Cassesso told him that four of the six men arrested and convicted were innocent. Chisholm said he believes the four innocent men were implicated by a duplicitous FBI informant named Joseph "The Animal" Barboza. Barboza's testimony at trial in the late 1960s is widely credited with ensuring the conviction of the four men.

Troubling to observers like Chisholm, who have followed the Deegan case for years, is substantial evidence -- some from FBI files -- that Deegan's murder was planned and carried out by Barboza. The information disclosed Tuesday by Chisholm supports the view that Barboza arranged to have Deegan killed and then, through his trial testimony, ultimately determined who would be convicted and who wouldn't.

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A variety of information, including previously secret FBI documents discovered late last year, suggests that Barboza planned Deegan's murder and carried it out with fellow gangsters Cassesso, James Vincent Flemmi, Wilfred Roy French and Romeo Martin.

The men ultimately convicted of the crime were Cassesso, French, Joseph Salvati, Louis Greco, Henry Tameleo and Peter Limone. Of the four men widely believed to have been innocent, Greco and Tameleo died in prison, Limone remains incarcerated and Salvati was pardoned in 1997.

Three of the four had ties to the New England Mafia in the 1960s and their convictions were publicity victories in what was then the FBI's all-out war against organized crime. The fourth, Salvati, owed Barboza a small amount of money.

Chisholm said Tuesday that Cassesso told him during one of their talks during the late 1960s that he could have avoided prison for the Deegan murder if he had thrown in with Barboza. But, Chisholm said, Cassesso refused to frame innocent

Chisholm said that at about the time Cassesso was awaiting trial for the Deegan murder in 1967, Cassesso was approached by FBI agent H. Paul Rico, now retired. Rico was a much-decorated agent in Boston known for his ability to persuade mobsters to become FBI informants and witnesses. Barboza was among the stable of informers groomed by Rico.

Chisholm said Rico told Cassesso he could avoid serving further time if he corroborated Barboza's testimony at the upcoming trial.

"He told me he told Rico that he wasn't going to frame any innocent people," Chisholm said.

Rico has repeatedly declined to comment on any aspect of the case.

Chisholm said he was prevented until recently from disclosing his conversations with Cassesso for legal reasons.

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON: CHISHOLM, RONALD; CASSESSO, RONALD; RICO, H PAUL

ORGANIZATION: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

KEY WORDS: MURDER; HOMICIDE; CRIME;

NEWS SUBJECT: Crime and Courts; Political and General News; Crime; English language content (GCRIM GCAT CRM ENGL)

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> > Thursday, January 4, 2001

MAIN (A)

FOUR CONVICTED IN MOB KILLING COULD BE CLEARED PROSECUTOR EXAMINING FRESH EVIDENCE; MEN MAY HAVE BEEN FRAMED

EDMUND H. MAHONY; Courant Staff Writer

The city's top prosecutor is expected to begin the legal process Friday that could clear four men convicted of a 1965 murder as his office continues to receive evidence suggesting that the four spent most of their lives in prison after being framed by a double-dealing FBI informant.

A veteran defense lawyer -- the second to do so this week -- said in a sworn affidavit Wednesday that in 1967 a client of his admitted participating in the notorious murder of Edward "Teddy" Deegan, but denied that four other men accused in the killing were involved. A day earlier, another city lawyer said his client told him the same thing in 1967.

Late last month, a special federal prosecutor investigating law enforcement corruption discovered a series of secret FBI memos showing that top bureau officers -- including former Director J. Edgar Hoover -- apparently suppressed credible evidence that could have prevented the four men from being convicted.

The FBI memorandums are the most convincing evidence to date. Citing information from a bureau source, they suggest that four of the six Boston-area men ultimately convicted for the murder -- Joseph Salvati, Peter Limone, Henry Tameleo and Louis Greco -- did not commit the crime.

The documents also show that the FBI knew that Deegan had been marked for death by men the bureau was cultivating as informants. Ultimately, the small-time hoodlum was gunned down in a Chelsea alley, and the two informants were allowed to escape prosecution.

The FBI memorandums and the information provided by the two lawyers suggest that Deegan's real killers were Joseph "The Animal" Barboza, Vincent "The Bear" Flemmi, Wilfred Roy French, Romeo Martin and Ronald Cassesso. Barboza and Flemmi were accomplished mob killers who became FBI informants during the investigation and prosecution of the Deegan case.

The four men believed by many to be innocent were convicted of murder on July

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31, 1968. Tameleo and Greco died in prison. Salvati was released in 1997 when former Gov. William Weld commuted his sentence. Limone remains in prison and continues to fight for his release.

Sources familiar with the Deegan case said Wednesday that, confronted by the growing body of evidence, Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph Martin will agree to Limone's release from prison during a court hearing on the case Friday in Cambridge. In addition, the sources said Martin no longer will oppose requests by Salvati and Limone for new trials. Martin also could decline further prosecution of the two men, the sources said.

Victor Garo, the lawyer who has been working to clear Salvati for more than 20 years, said he and his client would have nothing to say at least until Friday. Spokesmen for Limone could not be reached.

If Martin initiates measures that lead to the dismissal of charges against Salvati and Limone, it will mark a sharp departure from his office's past practices. Over the decades, the office of Suffolk District Attorney has reviewed evidence suggesting the four were innocent, but invariably dismissed it as incredible.

But the material brought forward over the last month paints perhaps the most convincing portrait of innocence to date -- particularly the previously secret FBI memorandums unearthed by special prosecutor John Durham, an assistant U.S. attorney from New Haven, Conn., with a reputation for impartiality.

Taken collectively, the new evidence supports allegations at the core of what Durham's U.S. Department of Justice task force has been assigned to investigate: whether some FBI agents broke the law when dealing with informants, and whether informants were permitted to commit murder without punishment.

In the Deegan case, Barboza and Flemmi, both of whom are dead, are identified by a variety of sources as organizing the murder. What's more, the two admitted their involvement in conversations with lawyers that were once protected by the lawyer-client privilege. After becoming informants, the two were never prosecuted.

Joseph Balliro Sr., a lawyer who represented Flemmi in the 1960s, signed an affidavit Tuesday in which he said Flemmi admitted that he and Barboza were in on the Deegan murder and that four innocent men were wrongly convicted. Balliro said Flemmi told him that Barboza decided to implicate the innocent men because they "had disrespected him."

In a second document Balliro disclosed Wednesday, one of Barboza's former lawyers -- F. Lee Bailey -- wrote that Barboza admitted helping to convict innocent men of the crime.

The convictions of the men Barboza identified as Deegan's murderers helped the FBI satisfy enormous pressure in the 1960s to convict members of the New England Mafia. Tameleo and Limone were senior Mafia members. Greco was an associate, and Salvati did favors for mobsters from time to time.

Barboza and Flemmi were recruited as informants by now retired FBI Agent H. Paul Rico. Rico also was involved in recruiting gangsters James "Whitey" Bulger and

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Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi -- Vincent Flemmi's brother -- as informants. Durham recently indicted Bulger and Stephen Flemmi for 21 murders, several committed while they were working for the FBI.

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON: SALVATI, JOSEPH; LIMONE, PETER; TAMELEO, HENRY; BARBOZA,

VINCENT; MARTIN, RALPH

ORGANIZATION: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

KEY WORDS: MURDER; HOMICIDE; CRIME;

NEWS SUBJECT: Crime and Courts; Political and General News; Crime; English

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Page 1

1/4/01 Boston Herald 004 2001 WL 3789819

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Thursday, January 4, 2001

NEWS

Another day in court; DA to seek new trials for convicts in Mob hit

JONATHAN WELLS

In a major reversal, Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph C. Martin II is preparing to seek new trials for two apparently innocent men convicted of a Mob murder 32 years ago, sources familiar with the case confirmed yesterday.

And if a judge grants those new trials for Joseph Salvati and Peter Limone - who together served more than 60 years in prison - Martin is expected to decline to prosecute and drop the charges.

Until now, prosecutors in Martin's office have steadfastly defended the integrity of the prosecution and conviction of Salvati, Limone and four other men in the March 12, 1965, slaying of gangster Edward "Teddy" Deegan.

But tomorrow morning in Middlesex Superior Court, Martin's prosecutor, Mark Lee, is expected to reverse field and support Limone's motion to stay the execution of his life sentence, sources said.

If that motion is granted by Superior Court Judge Margaret R. Hinkle, Limone, a reputed gangster, could be released from prison immediately.

Martin's apparent about-face comes amid an avalanche of new evidence supporting what Salvati and Limone have been saying since they were convicted in 1968: They were framed by the government's star witness, notorious Mob hit man Joseph "The Animal" Barboza.

The latest evidence that Barboza falsely implicated Salvati, Limone and two other men convicted in the Deegan case, Henry Tameleo and Louis Greco, came yesterday with the release of an affidavit written by veteran defense attorney Joseph J. Balliro Sr.

According to Balliro, in the summer of 1967, one of his clients, gangster Vincent "Jimmy the Bear" Flemmi, told him that "Barboza planned the (Deegan) killing and that he, Flemmi, had participated."

Balliro said Flemmi told him that Salvati, Limone, Tameleo and Greco had no part

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in the crime, but Barboza fingered them because they had each "disrespected him" in some fashion.

"Flemmi told me that when Barboza gave his account to the authorities, he substituted Joseph Salvati for Flemmi because Salvati had disrespected him," Balliro stated.

Salvati, who had no record of involvement with organized crime, was released from prison in 1997 after his sentence was commuted. Tameleo and Greco died in prison.

Balliro's affidavit emerged just one day after another longtime defense lawyer, Ronald J. Chisolm, told the Herald that in 1967 his client, Ronald Cassesso, who admitted his own role in the Deegan killing, told him Salvati, Limone, Tameleo and Greco were innocent.

Chisolm also revealed that Cassesso was approached by the FBI agent handling Barboza, H. Paul Rico, and offered no jail time on the Deegan murder if he backed up Barboza's testimony at trial. Cassesso declined the deal, Chisolm said, saying he would not implicate innocent men.

The biggest bombshell was dropped Dec. 19 when a special U.S. Department of Justice task force released long-hidden FBI reports showing top bureau officials including then-director J. Edgar Hoover - suppressed credible evidence that the four men were innocent.

Those informant reports not only identified the real killers just days after Deegan was murdered, but also revealed that Rico and other top FBI officials knew of the Deegan murder plot at least two days before it happened.

The head of the Justice Task Force, federal prosecutor John Durham, and U.S. Attorney Donald Stern attached a cover letter to the damaging FBI documents stating they were being released "with the concurrence and encouragement of the Boston FBI and FBI Headquarters."

Sources familiar with the Deegan case said the onslaught of new evidence forced Martin to rethink his longstanding defense of the Deegan murder prosecution.

James Borghesani, the spokeman for the DA's office, declined comment yesterday.

The sources said Martin's office has yet to interview Chisolm and Balliro.

In 1995, Martin's office opposed Salvati's motion for a new trial, which was then denied by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. For the last several months, Martin has fought against Limone's motion for a new trial.

Rico, the FBI agent who allegedly helped Barboza fashion his perjured testimony, has declined comment.

Barboza was murdered by a Mafia hit man in San Francisco in 1967. TABULAR OR GRAPHIC MATERIAL SET FORTH IN THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT DISPLAYABLE

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Caption: OFF THE HOOK? Reputed mobster Edward 'Teddy' Deegan, left, was slain 35 years ago. Joseph Salvati, right, who was convicted along with five other men in the murder plot, will get a new trial. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE REVERE INDEPENDENT; If a judge grants a new trial for Salvati, the district attorney is expected to drop charges. STAFF FILE PHOTO BY MATTHEW WEST; MAY BE FREED: If a motion is granted tomorrow by a Middlesex Superior Court judge, it would free Peter Limone, above, from prison. He was convicted in 1968. HERALD FILE PHOTO

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

NAMED PERSON: MARTIN, RALPH C II; SALVATI, JOSEPH; LIMONE, PETER; TAMELEO, HENRY; BALLIRO, JOSEPH J SR

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